

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Summer 2013

VOL XXVIII NO. 3

Crossroads Chapter Appeals for Help

Potash Mining Threatens Trail

*By A. Oscar Olson
and Linda Turner*

*With additional reporting
by John Krizek and Travis Boley*

The Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association has gotten support from the Sierra Club in its effort to halt development that would seriously impact the California National Historic Trail.

The concern is over the proposed Mesa Exploration Bounty Potash Mining Project east of the famous Historic California Trail landmark Donner Spring in the Pilot Valley salt flat playa. Mesa Exploration is based in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Crossroads Chapter leaders say potash mining is in no way compatible with this pristine segment of the Historic California Trail that delicately crosses the Great American Salt Desert.

Instead there are other locations developers can explore on the salt flat such as the Knolls area.

Without a change in development plans, chapter members believe a beautiful, silent, and haunting expanse of historic trail will be lost to the development.

Mark Clemens, a spokesman for the Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club, determined that a significant portion of what is identified as the potash project area was proposed as a wilderness area by the Utah Wilderness Coalition. Because of this proposal, the Sierra Club joins OCTA in opposing this project. They plan to run an article about this project in their upcoming chapter newsletter.

The Utah Rock Art Research Association also reports that it is joining OCTA in opposing this development. The association is familiar with the rare Native American rock art in this area.

A large portion the project area

is already designated by Congress as a National Historic Trail, administered by the National Park Service, and as part of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Late last year, the BLM released its new Trail Management Manual 6280, which creates new planning requirements for National Trails on BLM land that must take into account scenic, visual, cultural, and historic resources as well as recreation and visitor services, among other things.

It appears that Mesa Exploration was actively pursuing its interests on state land parcels in the area for some time. However, according to Utah BLM West Desert District Manager Kevin Oliver, no BLM permits have been granted to Mesa as of yet and all stakeholders (OCTA included) will have the opportunity to weigh in once

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OCTA National Convention End of the Trail and Beyond

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NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Send materials to
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CALENDAR

July 22 - 27, 2013
OCTA Convention
Clackamas, Oregon

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OCTA Heads to Oregon

By Jim Tompkins

The 2013 OCTA National Convention, "End of the Trail and Beyond" will be held the week of July 21, 2013. Most of the events will take place at the host hotel, the Monarch Hotel & Conference Center, 12566 SE 93rd Ave, Clackamas, OR 97015.

The convention highlights include pre-convention auto caravan tours along the Cowlitz Trail, along the Applegate Trail, and along the main stem of the Oregon Trail and the Barlow Road.

The National OCTA Board meets on July 21. At the same time a Heritage Resources Fair will highlight historical societies, museums, genealogical societies, and similar heritage organizations.

The convention will feature a keynote address by Kerry Tymchuk, head of the Oregon Historical Society and there will be presentations on a variety of other topics including American Indians, settlement, Oregon land claims, and early government in the region.

Historical research, trail mapping, pioneer clothing and smartphone apps for historical tours are the topics for convention workshops.

As with any OCTA Convention, a number of tours will be held. This year guides will take OCTA members to Mt. Hood, the Barlow Road, Oregon City, Government Camp, Pioneer Woman's Grave, Summit Meadows, and Laurel Hill.

The Oregon City tour will include stops at the End of the



Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, the McLoughlin House, and the Museum of the Oregon Territory.

On one tour in the Willamette Valley, sites to visit include missions in French Prairie, Mission Bottom, and Chemeketa. Another Willamette Valley tour takes in Aurora, Champoege State Heritage Park, mountain man "Doc" Newell's house, and Mt Angel Seminary.

OCTA members and supporters will be recognized during the annual Awards Banquet, and there will be a live auction.

This year around 40 authors will participate in Author's Night while a Living History Night at the Abernethy Center features performances by Susan Buttrille as Abigail Scott Duniway, Ray Egan as Father Luigi Rossi, and Karen Haas as Narcissa Whitman. That event also will include music by the Heartstrings duo of Nancy and Rob Downie.

To round out the events for the week, members and guests can attend a salmon dinner at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

But even when the convention ends, there are additional opportunities to experience and learn about the history of the region by taking part in a post convention tour to Fort Vancouver.

Volunteer Hours, Miles, and Expenses Needed

By Bill and Jeanne Watson

Many thanks to those of you who send in your volunteer hours, miles and expenses through your Chapter coordinator or directly to us. They were very successful in minimizing the impact on our Federal Agency Partners' budgets. Please keep them coming.

We urgently need these reports from the rest of you to help preserve funding for your Trail Projects. Please email your estimated or actual volunteer hours, miles and expenses reports by month to us at BillJeanneWatson@att.net, to Headquarters at KConway@indepmmo.org, or to Jere Krakow, OCTA's representative to the Partnership for the National Trails System, at jlkrakow@msn.com.



Potash Mining Threatens Trail

Continued from Front Page

anything is made available for public comment.

As reported in an Elko, NV, newspaper in March, the BLM advised Mesa of its intent to deny the company's exploratory permit. According to various sources since then, the company has protested the denial of a permit and has launched a major lobbying campaign to overturn any such ruling.

The Crossroads Chapter of OCTA has launched a major letter-writing campaign in support of such a denial, and hopes this mining request never rises to the level of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project.

Presently, those wishing to preserve the extant historic and natural resources of Pilot Valley have the opportunity to express support for the BLM's position to a wide variety of interested parties. Those entities would include the BLM, NPS, Box Elder and Tooele County Commissioners, the Utah Federal delegation, and Utah Governor Gary Herbert. During this critical interim we encourage all to express support for the BLM's current position.

For more background on this area, please call OCTA toll free at (888) 811-6282 to order Roy Tea's new 42-page book entitled *Final Ten Miles to Donner Springs: Historical Diary Record of Events & Experiences of Explorers and Emigrants Crossing Pilot Peak Playa, The Hastings Cutoff Trail to Donner Springs & Pilot Peak* (published March 2013).

For background information on the Hastings Cutoff and a map of the affected area, go to the OCTA web site, OCTA-trails.org.

You can learn more about what Mesa is proposing on the section of their website regarding the Bounty Potash Project. This is an ongoing, developing story and more updates will be provided as new information becomes available.

The Crossroads Chapter wants to save the Hastings Cutoff and the Donner Springs area of Pilot Valley. We need your help and we need it now. We've sent letters out already but need many more. Please write to BLM and Utah politicians. Use of Will Bagley's article on the next page as an enclosure is encouraged.

Some individuals you can write to are:

Utah BLM State Director Juan Palma, 440 West 200 South, Suite

500, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101-1345.

Utah BLM West Desert District Manager Kevin Oliver, 2370 South 2300 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84119, Salt Lake Field Office Governor Gary Herbert, 350 North State Street, Suite 200, PO Box 142220, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2220.

Congressman Rob Bishop, 1017 Federal Building, 324 25th St., Ogden, UT 84401.

Congressman Jason Chaffetz, 51 S University Ave., Suite 318, Provo, UT 84601.

Congressman Jim Matheson, 9067 South 1300 West, Suite 101, West Jordan, UT 84008.

Congressman Chris Stewart, 136 E. South Temple St., Suite 900, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

If you have questions-contact Gar Elison, T. Mike Smith or Linda Turner, lindat.crossroads@gmail.com.

Development to Destroy Wyoming Trail Site

A housing development in Evansville, WY, will destroy a historic site according to Carolyn Buff of the Wyoming Archeological Society.

Camp Payne, also known as Fort Clay and Camp Davis, was an Army camp at the historic Reshaw's Bridge in Evansville. It protected the strategic crossing of the North Platte River along the Oregon Trail.

Buff along with volunteers and staff from Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office and the State Archeologist's office, recently

excavated portions of the Camp Payne/Reshaw Bridge Oregon Trail site in Evansville, Wyoming. Earth moving equipment arrived shortly thereafter to begin building new homes on the historic site.

"The whole area is full of history, and just bit by bit we're just killing it off," Buff said. "We're just destroying it, digging it up, putting houses on it or building roads over it and just totally disregarding it."

Earlier archaeological work uncovered hundreds of artifacts.

WILL UTAH TRADE OUR BIRTHRIGHT FOR A MESS OF POTASH?

By Will Bagley

Exactly 166 years ago, John C. Fremont led his topographical engineers and his escort of French mountaineers and American guides on the first known crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert's 90 waterless miles from Skull Valley to the spring at the foot of the towering 10,720-foot landmark he named Pilot Peak.

A year later, an clever, ambitious young promoter with big dreams named Lansford Hastings persuaded about 500 souls to follow him on the Hastings Cutoff, his untested shortcut to California in 1846. His shortcut proved to be no shortcut, and much tougher than the tried-and-tested California Trail. That fall, 41 of the men, women, and children who had followed his cutoff with the Donner Party starved to death in the Sierra Nevada.

For almost 25 years, members of Utah's Crossroads Chapter of OCTA have been following the tracks of the hundreds of wagon that used the Hastings Cutoff between 1846 and 1850. Three national OCTA conventions have visited Donner Springs to appreciate its magnificent silence and scenery, so little changed for so long. In 1994 I accompanied about 500 other "rut-nuts" to dedicate a kiosk and historical marker and gaze in wonder at the emigrant tracks left on trail's last ten pristine miles.

Now Mesa Exploration Corp., an international mining company headquartered in British Columbia, wants to strip mine one of the most beautiful and historic landscapes in Utah, the Pilot Peak Playa. Formerly focused on

uranium speculation, Mesa has its eye on the potash Lake Bonneville deposited long ago on the public lands of the Great Salt Lake Desert.

Mesa's proposed Bounty Potash Project, located 120 miles west of Salt Lake City and 15 miles north of Wendover, wants to industrialize 104 square miles of the shimmering white salt flats that lie between Silver Island and Donner Springs at the foot of Pilot Peak. Before it went bankrupt, MagCorp, destroyed miles of the Hastings Cutoff on the eastern edge of the salt flats, leaving behind a scarred and bankrupt landscape.

Mesa claims to have Utah Senators Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee, along with Congressman Rob Bishop, leaning on the Bureau of Land Management to authorize the project to "reduce dependence on foreign producers," "provide economic development," and jobs, jobs, jobs! Yet the Canadian corporation, whose stock currently trades for 9 cents a share, claims on its website that the low-capital project would have low operating costs, no fleet of trucks or loaders, and require only "a minimal maintenance and mill crew."

The ball is now in the BLM's court. Anyone who has worked with the bureau's dedicated public servants know they have the toughest job in the West—managing and making hard choices about our nation's public lands, America's public domain. The BLM has authorized thousands of gas and oil wells, not to mention thousands of mining projects, but it is also tasked with defending our national heritage and the vast and empty landscapes

that make the West western.

So much of Utah's Salt Desert has been industrialized that the salt on the Bonneville Salt Flats is blowing away. East of Wendover, Intrepid Potash's brine ditches and evaporation ponds cover 90 square miles along Interstate 80. If Mesa Corp. wants to use an American public resource to enrich its officers and investors, it should turn its attention to the already desecrated salt flats along Interstate 80.

Genesis tells the ancient tale of how Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew. For thousands of years, this "mess of pottage" has represented something worthless that is foolishly traded for an immensely more valuable birthright.

For many of us, the playa at Pilot Peak is a national treasure, what the Park Service calls a place that is "fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, and vulnerable to adverse change." The American past has an almost magical ability to disappear, but beneath the looming majesty of Pilot Peak, silent stretches of the Hastings Cutoff endure. The singular landscape of the Pilot Peak Playa should be a National Monument, not a strip mine.

The playa and its historic landscape is "one of the few places where you can stand in 2013 and 1846 at the same time," archaeologist Terry Del Bene observed. "That's pretty special. We're running out of places like that." We can squander this national treasure for a mess of potash, or protect and defend the qualities that make it unique—and a worthy legacy to bequeath to future generations.

It Takes a Committee to Plan a “Family” Reunion

*By Jim Tompkins
Convention Chair*

In many ways an OCTA convention is like a family reunion. Once a year our family gets together and reminiscences about our shared interests. We bring out the photo albums (probably all on smart phones this year), share what we have done and tell about where we have been in the last year. We show off our backyard and brag about the kids and grandkids. Only instead of the hot dogs, potato salad, a softball game, and hugs from Aunt Midge, we talk about the Oregon Trail.

This year about three dozen of your “cousins” along the trail have been involved in planning and implementing your week in our “backyard,” the beautiful, green Willamette Valley. I would like to take this space to give a shout-out to some of these people who have provided considerable work, advice, and support.

Roger Blair, our chapter past president as well as national past president, has been very busy. He has been planning both the Mount Hood bus tour and the Oregon Trail hike pre-tour. He has already chosen a blue-ribbon group of speakers and workshop leaders. He is also in charge of the opening ceremonies, the awards banquet, and VIP invitations.

Susan Doyle, our chapter newsletter editor, is also working on the Mount Hood bus tour as well as doing a considerable amount of writing for the registration and convention booklets.



Rich Herman, chapter vice president, is our liaison with the Monarch Hotel as well as a logistics advisor for tours and events. Rich is extremely valuable when it is necessary to charm someone we are working with.

Mary Bywater Cross, author and quilt expert, and **Lethene Parks**, past chapter president and past national officer, have worked very hard to plan an event new to us this year, the Heritage Fair. They are bringing together dozens of organizations specializing in heritage, history, genealogy, and pioneer life.

Glenn Harrison, past chapter and national president, is this year's convention treasurer. He has carefully crafted the Willamette Valley Settlements bus tour. The coffee mugs with our convention logo was his idea.

Polly Jackson, chapter secretary, along with Muriel Carbiener and Carol Harrison, head up the registration team. They will probably be the first people you see as you arrive and pick up your tote bags and name tags.

Sallie Riehl is the head of the book room this year. She has organized dozens of book sellers and Authors Night will be one of the largest ever for OCTA.

Kathy Buob, a Northwest member living in Sacramento, CA, has planned the Willamette Valley

Missions bus tour.

Paul Massee, national board member, has planned the Barlow Road hiking tour. He is also our liaison with the bus company.

Chuck Hornbuckle, of Olympia, WA, and **Leta Neiderheiser**, of Grants Pass, OR, have planned pre-tours to or from their neighborhoods and the convention along the Cowlitz and Applegate Trails.

Tuck and Kay Forsythe, of Ellensburg, WA, have been collecting a massive array of items to be auctioned or raffled off during the convention.

Suzanne Hornbuckle, **Marley Shurtleff**, **Donna Hazel**, **Jenny Miller**, **Kathy Franzwa**, **Shirlee Evans**, **Jane Kirkpatrick**, **Billy Symms**, **Gail Carbiener**, **Jim Riehl**, and **Lynn Alvord** will all be involved as tour guides, emergency vehicle drivers, and with registration or volunteer coordination.

As for myself, **Jim Tompkins**, your chapter president and convention chairman, in addition to sitting around and watching everyone else work (which as a junior high school teacher I got very good at), I have been planning the Oregon City bus tour, the salmon bake at the Big Wagons, and coordinating the entertainment.

We all hope to see you at the 31st annual OCTA Family Reunion in Oregon City July 21-26. Be sure to ask for the special \$99 rate at the Monarch Hotel.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Future of OCTA is Bright

By Duane Iles
96cruisin@embarqmail.com

Greetings dear OCTA friends. I can hardly believe that two years have passed since the first column I wrote as president. They have been eventful and busy years. We have accomplished much and kept OCTA the number one historical trail organization.

Looking ahead, I am really optimistic. We have a very bright future. Conventions and symposia are being planned for several years coming. We have maintained a balanced budget for several years now and our endowments are growing. We have formed a Tribal Liaison Committee to work with the Native Americans to learn their stories of the trail and hopefully bring them into OCTA. (See related article on page.7).

A local signage program funded by the National Park Service is ending the first year with some really first rate projects to assist

the visitor in following the trails. Our libraries are growing with new collections being added. Our chapters are active and strong. We have a dedicated board of directors and group of officers. John Krizek and his leadership team will lead us well in the coming years. We are indeed fortunate to have their leadership and direction. Travis and Kathy in Independence make things happen. They quietly go about their business and accomplish tremendous things. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented pair.

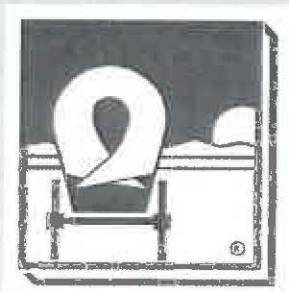
It would be impossible to recap our work without mentioning the importance of our partnership with the National Park Service. Aaron Mahr and his staff have assisted me in so many ways I cannot mention them all. They make possible many of the things we achieve. They are indeed special friends.

This is not to say there are

not challenges. We have implemented a new approach to our preservation team under the capable leadership of Jere Krakow that will make it a team effort with chapter preservation officers. This will be important due to the many assaults on the trails from transmission lines, wind turbines, drilling, etc.

Despite being balanced, our budget is always a difficult challenge as we juggle funding needed to implement all the wonderful projects we plan. Finally, the largest problem is our membership numbers. The number is static or declining slightly. This has been ongoing difficulty for us.

I have never had the privilege of working with a finer group of people. I want to thank each and every one of you for your support over the last two years. Thank you for allowing me the great honor of being President of OCTA.



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Annual Appeal Exceeds Expectations, Raises \$24,000

By Kathy Conway
Headquarters Manager

We concluded our annual campaign in early spring and wish to thank those who have contributed since the printing of the last *News from the Plains*.

Contributors are:

Della Bauer
Thomas and Dee Birch
Joseph and Elizabeth
Joe and Jean Ellingson
Bob Evanhoe
James Foster
Lance George
Vern and Ilene Gorzitze

Sharon Hanson
Glenn and Carol Harrison
James B. Herring
Robert A. Iverson
Martin Kemmerling
James King
Charles Kuster
Michael La Salle
Richard H. Lachmann
Charles and Harriet Lewis
Kendall McNabney
Phil Miller
Amy Murphy
Judson Mygatt
Shannon Perry
Eula and Jim Pritchard
Dan Rottenberg
Donald Seibert
Robert and Alice Shellenberger
Harry Smith

Newton TerMeer
Richard and Shirley Trevallee
Mark Wilson

Don't forget to register and come to OCTA's 2013 National Convention "End of the Trail and Beyond" the week of July 21, 2013, at the Monarch Hotel, Clackamas, OR. On the agenda are great sessions, tours, and more than thirty authors in attendance for Authors Night! Special events include "Living History Night" at the Abernethy Center, and a salmon dinner with special entertainment planned at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

OCTA Publications Study Currently Underway

The OCTA Publications Committee, at the request of the Board, is evaluating options for future publication and delivery of the *Overland Journal* and *News From the Plains*. Recommendations that may include optional digital delivery of the publications will be made to the Board at its July 21 meeting. If you have an opinion on this topic, contact Acting Publications Committee Chair Bill Martin at bmartinocata@gmail.com.

NPS Provides Support for Mapping Emigrant Trails

By David Welch
welchdj@comcast.net

Last year the National Park Service added a task to the co-operative agreement with OCTA that will provide reimbursement of some expenses of individuals involved in mapping the National Historic Trails. Over \$14,000 is available to cover lodging, per diem, and mileage expenses.

The focus of the task is to map the trails in accordance with OCTA's Mapping Emigrant Trails Manual. Typically, the mapping effort will focus on one USGS

1:24,000 scale quadrangle. The selected quads should be in areas not currently covered by maps that have been submitted to the NPS.

All chapters are encouraged to develop mapping projects and to submit a request. Due to the limited funds, it is probable that not all expenses will be covered, but the fund should provide a substantial subsidy for volunteer efforts.

If you are interested in participating in the program, please contact me for full details. If possible, please identify the area of interest to you.

Tribal Liaison Committee Formed

*By Duane Iles
OCTA President*

The Oregon-California Trails Association has long been the authority on the great emigrant migration west to create a coast-to-coast nation. Much of the story is based on the abundance of journals left by emigrants who had a great sense of the importance of what they were doing. But, this only tells half the story, which does not truly take into account that the West was already populated.

What is the story of those people who were here first? To do honor to telling the "story" we need to hear it from both sides. Moreover, we need the tribes to tell the stories themselves. This is a story long neglected that demands to be told. Although Indians did not keep journals, they passed the story orally to subsequent

generations.

The effort to encourage tribal members to tell the stories of the trails from their perspectives grew out of NPS-sponsored Listening Sessions led by Tribal Liaison Otis Halfmoon in 2012.

The effort culminated in the session held in March at Ft. Hall, ID, on the Shoshone-Bannock Reservation. Attending that session were representatives of thirteen tribal nations, NPS staff led by Halfmoon, and OCTA representatives John Krizek, Travis Boley and myself.

It was a mutually beneficial meeting with a feeling that it was time to move beyond listening sessions and begin identifying goals then beginning the work including creation of a Council of Trail Tribes (COTT). This would be a partnership among the Trail Tribes, OCTA and the National Trails Intermountain Region.

To further these goals an OCTA Tribal Liaison Committee was formed to create a team to become skilled at tribal relations and develop interpersonal relationships.

At present the committee is composed of Krizek, Jere Krakow, Paul Masee, Shania Cook, Boley, myself, and Halfmoon as NPS Liaison.

This is all in the developmental stage yet it continues OCTA's record of being the trail leader as the organization builds bridges with the Native Americans who were here first. The next step will probably be a follow-up session at Fort Hall later this year and hopefully a listening session with Rancherias in Susanville, CA.

As Halfmoon says, "OCTA is being proactive with its outreach to the Tribes...OCTA is the trendsetter. This is only the beginning."

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Marysville Surf Motel	2105 Center St	Marysville, KS
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First Commerce Bank	902 Broadway	Marysville KS
Y Loop Road Trips	PO Box 222,	Wapiti WY
American Fire and Safety	PO Box 272	St Joseph, MO

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Paper Trail Site Gets Increased Attention

By Marley Shurtleff

Jim Riehl, OCTA's main contact for all things related to COED and Paper Trail, reports that more people surfing the web are paying attention to the OCTA Paper Trail site online. As a result, more people are purchasing subscriptions to Paper Trail. He has been doing some Google searches and thinks he has found a couple of reasons why that is happening.

Increased site traffic likely has something to do with the nice introduction provided on the National Park Service website. Doing a Google search for "Oregon Trail" brings up an NPS site (www.nps.gov/oreg/index.htm) with a link to Paper Trail. (Be sure to scroll to the right in the

green "Features" section to bring up the link.)

While the COED database and the Paper Trail site are closed to new additional diary listings, the wealth of information currently available on travelers along the trail is amazing, and is well worth checking out.

Also, on the first page of suggested sites offered up when searching for "Oregon Trail," Google provides the link to a Wikipedia article about the Oregon Trail. One of the advantages (or disadvantages) of Wikipedia is that information can be added by anyone. At this site, there seems to have been a thorough inclusion of the details, and the result is comprehensive,

and quite informative. Take a look! (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_Trail).

Please note that OCTA members do NOT have to subscribe to Paper Trail. Free access is offered as a benefit of membership.

For members only

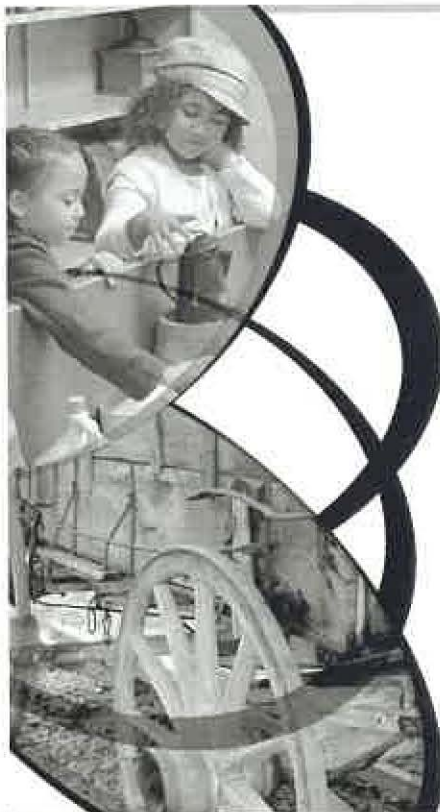
Connect to the search capabilities of Paper Trail (www.paper-trail.org)

Click on "log in"

For username, enter the word "member"

For password, enter "wagons" (lower case)

Please don't share this free access with non-members.



NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS MUSEUM

The **National Frontier Trails Museum** in Independence, Missouri brings the pioneer experience on the trails to life. The only museum in the nation certified to interpret the Lewis & Clark, Santa Fe, Oregon, California and Mormon Pioneer trails, the **National Frontier Trails Museum** offers:

- A unique collection of original artifacts and special exhibits
- Firsthand written accounts, travel diaries and journals
- Interactive displays, audio guides and gallery walks
- Children's programs and activities
- A robust research library
- A gift store with the region's largest selection of trails books and merchandise

Pack your provisions, circle the wagons and saddle up for a visit to the **National Frontier Trails Museum** where the West welcomes you, the journey begins and your adventure awaits.

318 W. Pacific • Independence, MO 64050 • www.FrontierTrailsMuseum.org

New 2014 Trails Calendar Now Available

*By Bill Hill
Education Awards and
Publications Committee Chair*

The artwork of the fourteen students depicting the clothing and equipment of the U.S. military and mountain men comes together in the 2014 OCTA Calendar, sponsored by the Education Awards and Publications Committee.

The annual calendar contest is open to elementary aged students. Each year a different topic or theme is selected and in the spring students are asked to submit an original drawing reflective of the theme. Information about the contest is available on OCTA's website and a limited number of notices are mailed to various school districts in the fall. Students with the guidance from their teachers or parents may research the theme or topic and then submit artwork depicting it. In April and May the artwork was reviewed and selected, the individual students notified, and now, the new 2014 calendar, "Military and Mountain Man Clothing and Equipment" is being printed. It will be available at the July convention and at headquarters. The cost is only \$5 plus shipping. Be sure to order your calendar from headquarters now. There are only a limited number available for sale. Support our young artists and get a cute, useful calendar.

This project is one of the ways OCTA, through the Education Committee, fulfills its mission and helps to introduce students to the trails. It uses an interdisciplinary approach in teaching by

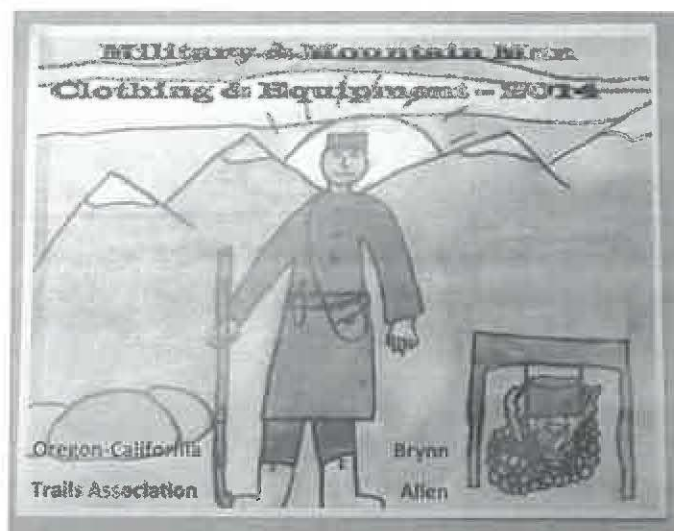
combining both history and art. Some schools are now regular participants in our contest and their teachers have incorporated it into their curriculum and lessons. They understand its value, and the students enjoy the work. Even though we encourage school participation, each year we also have individual students participating without formal classroom direction.

Congratulations to our budding artist/historians! They are listed with their teachers and schools as follows:

Elie Aune, Brynn Allen, Abby Scott students of Mrs. Hansen, Upland Terrace, Salt Lake City, UT; Grace Bauman, Saya Zeleznik, Jake Bucher, students of Ms. Leisha Black/Rachel Lowry, Canyon Rim Academy, Salt Lake City, UT; Sophia Whitehead, Mrs. Riggs, Upland Terrace, Salt Lake City, UT; Donovan Hannert, Ms. Garvin, Jim Bridger Elementary School, Jordan, UT; Kendyl Owsley, Mrs. Castro/Mrs. Mielke, Traut Core Knowledge School, Fort Collins, CO; Austin Raddon and Ashton Anderson, Ms. Leisha Black/ Mrs. Romney, Canyon Rim Academy, Salt Lake City, UT; Tristan G. Wann and Mailee Goddard, Ms. Leisha Black/Mrs. Jenkins, Canyon Rim Academy, Salt Lake City,

UT; Vivian Pedraza, Mrs. Johnson, Westridge Elementary, Rock Springs, WY.

Each student whose artwork was selected will receive a copy of the calendar and a check for \$50. One copy of the calendar will also be sent to the student's elementary school. We will also wish to thank



those teachers for their cooperation, who integrated our project into their busy schedules.

Contest guidelines for our 2015 calendar project "Plants along the Trails - Edible, Medicinal & Dangerous" can be viewed on OCTA's website.

Ask your children and grandchildren to tell their teachers about the project and to look at the website. If a school or teacher does not have sufficient time to devote to the project, individual students may still enter the contest and be judged the same as those submitted by a school/teacher. It is the artwork that is judged and selected.

Sierra Nevada

Its Name and Its Significance

Story and Photos
By Frank Tortorich

I have had a love affair with the Sierra Nevada since I was about six years old. Just after World War II ended, my parents took my sister and me to Yosemite Valley for a vacation. I fell in love with Yosemite at that moment. However, I was too young to understand those feelings. During my childhood, growing up in Jackson, CA, my father took me fishing and hiking to the mountains in the Carson Pass area.

I was always interested in seeing what was over the next ridge. I always felt comfortable and at home in the Sierra. I always seemed to know where I was and what direction of travel was correct.

As a young adult living in the Sierra foothills in Jackson, CA, I started taking my family to Yosemite. We had a pickup camper and about six times a year we would pack on Friday afternoon and head to Yosemite for the weekend. We hiked on every valley floor trail in the winter months and the high country trails in the summer. However, I knew there was more to the Sierra Nevada than just Yosemite. I wanted to see more of this mountain range that extends about 360 miles from just south of Mt. Lassen to Walker Pass, just east of Bakersfield, California. As time went on, I became an avid backpacker and reader of the rich history of the Sierra.

During the summers of 1969-72, a fellow teacher and I backpacked the 225-mile John Muir Trail from Yosemite Valley to the top of Mt. Whitney. The literature tells you the John Muir Trail is 212 miles long. While this is true, one needs to walk another 13 miles from the top of Mt. Whitney to get to the nearest road for a ride home.



A view of the Sierra Crest.

Many of my backpacking trips took me to the Carson Pass area on California State Highway 88. It was here that I came across the Emigrant Trail and became fascinated with the history of Carson Pass.

After our marriage in 1978, my wife Mary Ann and I were guests of neighbors Glenn and Nancy Gottschall for a BBQ. Glenn happened to be the new Amador District Ranger for the Eldorado National Forest. I asked Glenn what he knew about the Emigrant Trail. He said he knew very little and he wanted to know what I knew. I admitted that I, too, knew very little. Glenn invited me to

sign on as a volunteer and do the research on the Trail for the district. Being a teacher with time in the summer to hike around, I said, "Sure."

Living about an hour's drive from Carson Pass, I can zip up the mountain spend a few hours, and still be home to take care of my chores.

With my love of the Sierra Nevada, the Emigrant Trail only 50 miles away from where I live, and research expenses paid by the government, I was in "hog heaven."

My thinking was that this would be a fun thing to do for a few summers never realizing it would lead to a lifelong addiction to the Trail.

Sierra Nevada: Most likely two Franciscan Missionaries who observed the mountains to the east and referred to them as "una gran sierra nevada" first named it in 1776 as that is when it first

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Sierra Nevada

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appeared on a map. The meaning is mountain range with a jagged line of peaks or ragged profile.

I have a serious pet peeve regarding the misuse of the term Sierra Nevada.

In Spanish, Sierra Nevada loosely translates to "snowy mountains." A more accurate Spanish translation of the word Sierra would be the cutting tool, "saw," and Nevada would be "snow-covered."

In Spanish, Sierra is plural. Therefore, the proper use is Sierra and never "Sierras." "Sierras" would be a double plural. The term Sierras is misused by so many people and in publications that it almost has become common usage. I hope this never happens.

The other misuse is the term, "Sierra Nevada Mountains." Since the term Sierra already means mountains, adding mountains after Nevada is saying, "snow covered mountains mountains."

Naturalist, writer, and conservationist John Muir referred to the Sierra Nevada as the "Range of Light," which I find to be an accurate description. If one spends any time hiking in the Sierra Nevada or views it from afar, it is truly "The Range of light," jagged and snow covered.

The Sierra Nevada was the last great barrier for the emigrants coming to California. For many this was the Elephant.

Near Carson Pass there is a fractured dome referred to as Elephant Back. I am sure the emigrants named it as they struggled to conquer the West Pass summit, 9,640 feet above the sea. The emigrants could



Devils ladder is the emigrant trail approaching the Sierra summit at Carson Pass.

easily observe the sloping west side of this dome. With a little imagination, it could be perceived as the back of an elephant, much in the same way the emigrants and mountain men observed and named the formations of Chimney Rock and Court House Rock along the Trail on the plains of Nebraska.

Even at its great heights with peaks exceeding 14,000 feet, Indians seeking to trade crossed the Sierra Nevada on foot trails that were well beaten from thousands of summers of continued use.

The Indians living on the east side coveted the seashells and acorns that were in abundance for the Indians of the west side. In turn, the Indians living on the west side coveted the obsidian and wonderful pine nuts from the single needled pine. Many other items would have been traded, such as baskets and animal skins.

When the first white men came into the Sierra Nevada, the Indians and their foot trails helped the newcomers find a way to cross this

mountain range.

The first recording of a white man crossing the Sierra Nevada was of hunter, trapper, fur trader, trailblazer and explorer Jedediah Smith in 1827. Smith and his party of trappers came into California by the southern route, entering the San

Diego area.

In early May, Smith, attempting to go to the summer rendezvous in Wyoming for more men and supplies, tried to cross the Sierra Nevada by following the American River east. Deep snow forced him to turn back, but he successfully crossed just weeks later. It is not clear where Smith and his few companions crossed the Sierra summit, but most likely it was between Carson Pass and Ebbetts Pass on State Route 4. It is curious to note that Smith crossed from west to east, however there is no evidence that Smith followed Indian trails.

The Joseph Walker party did follow Indian trails over the Sierra in 1833. Zenas Leonard who traveled with Walker wrote, "I do not believe we passed a single day without seeing Indians."

The Walker party most likely followed an Indian trail through which is now referred to as Bloody Canyon, crossing over the Sierra summit into what is now

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Sierra Nevada

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called Yosemite Park. When the Walker party left California, they re-crossed at its most southern end of the Sierra Nevada following an Indian trail through a pass that would forever retain the name of Walker Pass.

The first organized group with wagons to set out for California with wagons was the Bidwell-Bartleson party of 1841.

There was a group of Oregon-bound missionaries organized by Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, led by five experienced mountain men, one of whom was Thomas "Brokenhand" Fitzpatrick. The Bartleson party, with about 15 wagons and some 62 people, set out for California with no experienced guide or blazed wagon trail leading over the Sierra, joined the De Smet group in May and traveled with them.

After getting as much information as possible from Fitzpatrick, on August 10, 1841, at Soda Spring, south of Fort Hall in Idaho, half of Bartleson party split from the De Smet party, turning their wagons and oxen south and west for California.

With no wagon trail of any kind leading to California and thinking it was foolhardy to set off into the great unknown, the other half decided to follow Fr. De Smet to Oregon.

The Bartleson party, after abandoning their wagons in the desert in present northeast Nevada, struggled to cross the Sierra Nevada, somewhere near and north of Sonora Pass. They did encounter Indians all along the way. However since they experienced great hardships

crossing over, it is assumed they did not follow Indian trails. The only woman in this party, Nancy Kelsey, would be the first white woman, barefoot and carrying her baby, to cross the Sierra Nevada.

In the winter of 1843-44 John C. Frémont, on his second expedition to the west, named numerous features along the way including



Hope Valley is the first Sierra meadow the emigrants would enter after the Nevada desert.

a river he named for his friend Kit Carson. It would be years later that the pass would carry the name as Carson Pass. Again, the Fremont group follow Indian trails and directions.

In 1844, the first emigrant wagons reached California by crossing the Sierra Nevada and established the first overland trail to California.

The Murphy, Stevens, Townsend party consisted of 23 men, eight women, 15 children, and 11 wagons. After following the Humboldt River to its end in Nevada, and not knowing where to go, trapper Caleb Greenwood, the scout for the group, met with an Indian they named Truckee.

Truckee guided them on the Indian path that would accommodate wagons to cross the Sierra Nevada. They took five of the wagons and were able to make it to Sutter's Fort. The other six wagons were left at a lake now called Donner Lake. A 17-year-old man, Moses Shallenberger, was left there for the winter to watch

over them. Moses was successfully rescued the following spring but the wagons and their contents were not.

This trail was referred to as the Truckee River route for only two years because after the Donner tragedy of 1846-47, it would thereafter be known as the

Donner route. This trail was the only wagon trail over the Sierra Nevada until 1848.

Gold was discovered in California on January 14, 1848.

On February 2, 1848, the United States and Mexico executed the treaty of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the war with Mexico and deeding most of Alta California to the United States.

With the war over members of the U.S. Army known as the Mormon Battalion had been stranded in California. Some of these discharged members worked at the gold discovery site. Many of these Mormon men knew that Brigham Young had ended the

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Touring the Old Spanish Trail and Preparing for Trail Marking

By A. Oscar Olson
and Linda Turner

We held our spring membership meeting March 21 with 35 people in attendance. Our speaker and early Crossroads supporter, Steven Madsen, spoke on his book, *Exploring Desert Stone*, about the John N. Macomb's 1959 expedition to explore the Canyonlands of Utah, via the Spanish Trail from Santa Fe and returning. We also discussed and passed the new chapter by-laws that T. Michael Smith and committee have been working on for a year or so.

In early May we revisited the area we had covered in a 2001 field rip led by A. Oscar Olson that took us along the Spanish Trail and Denver & Rio Grande railroad grade through Utah's San Rafael swell. The tour began at Castle

Sierra Nevada

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Mormon exodus from Illinois and settled in the Salt Lake valley.

They wanted to join their families and in June 1848 a Mormon party consisting of 45 men, one woman, Melisa Coray, 17 wagons, two brass cannons, and 300 head of animals, headed into the Sierra, ultimately arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in October of that year. Their trail, the Carson River Route of the California Emigrant Trail, became the most heavily used route during the gold rush.



Crossroads Chapter members Jesse Petersen, Bryce Billings, Vic Heath and Roy Tea (seated) took part in an OCTA work day April 25 where they prepared rail post markers that will be put in place later this year. (Photo by A. Oscar Olson)

Dale, UT. We explored some of the Spanish Trail in this part of Utah, as well as some significant petroglyph sites. We included a recent find of an inscription on Spanish Trail dated "JG 1845." It was kicked around about who this might represent, and we thought it was possibly John Gunnison. We spent a night in Green River, UT before following the Green River to locate the marked crossing of the Old Spanish Trail. The rest of the day was spent exploring the trail along with the never completed railroad grade. We viewed cuts and fills, the stone cabins built for railroad workers, rock-built culverts, and saw Railroad Rock where the railroad carved many names and dates: 1880-1881. Author and historian John Eldredge created our trail guides, using the 2001 guide and

modifying it some. Thanks to you John.

We started out in nine vehicles and 19 people on Friday, and on Saturday we had six vehicles and 10 participants who attended a group dinner at the Balanced Rock Café in the historic mining town of Helper, Utah. Some participants did not have four-wheel-drive vehicles, or the time to stay with the full tour.

We also had a work day in April at Tooele, UT, to attach the historic text to 16 rail posts scheduled to be set this season on the Central Overland Trail. This has been author Jesse Petersen's project. We had five show up for this day. Rail post setting days are being scheduled. Future activities include the fall BBQ and social on August 30, 2013, and the fall field trip.

Applegate Trail Preservation Efforts

This is an update on the information given by Leslie Fryman, former National Trail Preservation Officer, in the Fall 2012 CA/NV Chapter newsletter, concerning the preservation of the Applegate Trail in Sexton Pass, Interstate (I-5) passing lane construction near Grants Pass, OR.

The local TV Station KDRV Channel 12 serving the Grants Pass area, reported that work was starting and the Applegate Trail would be protected. The Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society (HNAHS) (most members are OCTA

members) called ODOT representative Sam Dunnivant for a field trip to the site to verify the preservation of the Trail and other historical roads that sometimes sandwich themselves one on top of each other in this area: Indian trail, Applegate Trail, Military Road, Stage Road and 1911 county road.

Good news: They are protecting 100 percent of the area of OCTA concern. We appreciate ODOT's consideration of HNAHA's point of view, but ODOT has never confirmed our research in any written communication.

The following is a quotation from our most solid piece of evidence that this is the Applegate Trail: From the "Commissioner's Journal, Volume 5, Page 49, Change Oregon & California Wagon Road in sec 27-34-0. Also Sec 14-22 & 23 – Twp 34S. R 6 WWM; In the matter of the change of a portion of the Oregon & California wagon road from a point near Sexton's Ranch in Sec 27-Twp 34S., R 6 WWM, running north to Grave Post Office in Sec 11-34-6;...It is therefore ordered that the (Commissioners Board) CB or (Road Viewer) RV meet and proceed to view and lay out the survey the necessary changes to be made, the same not to exceed 60 feet in width, and to ascertain the ownership of lands necessary to be appropriated and the value of such lands and to assess any damages and file their report before the next regular term of this Court. September 9, 1911 – Page 289." This road was surveyed and completed.

Big thanks are extended to HNAHS, Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Committee, OCTA, and ODOT for the protection of the trail in this area.

For more information on the Applegate Trail in Josephine County, Oregon see www.hugoneighborhood.org.

Ladd Hill Fails To Win "Endangered" Status

The Northwest Chapter recently nominated Ladd Hill for inclusion on "Oregon's Most Endangered Places" list. The chapter just learned, however, that Ladd Hill did not make the final cut.

Decisions as to inclusion are made by the Historic Preservation League of Oregon. The League stated that they received more nominations this year than ever before and were faced with very difficult choices as to which properties would be most appropriate for this year's list.

The review committee was charged with evaluating nominations on the basis of urgency, historic significance, local support, and future viability — while also striving to represent

the broad geography, history, and place types.

The committee felt that the nomination for this resource did not rise to the same level of urgency and local support as some of the other nominees, but that the high level of historic significance would make it a worthy property to reconsider in 2014 with some additional information provided.

Ladd Hill is located near LaGrande. The Oregon Trail descended into the Grande Ronde Valley from Ladd Canyon Hill near LaGrande. The ruts there, according to a website maintained by Tom Laidlaw, are harder to find every year. Farm roads and pipeline scars are often misleading.

NEWS FROM SOUTHERN TRAILS

Trail Turtles Seek Mimbres River Crossing

By Rose Ann Tompkins

Ten trail mappers turned out in April to look for the crossings of the Mimbres River in southwestern New Mexico. Research shows that there was more than one crossing. Early emigrants used a crossing in an area that later became known as Mowry City. Miners, merchants and the military also used this crossing, as they traveled between the Santa Rita silver mines and various places along the Rio Grande.

Having located the remains of the Butterfield Stage Station via Google Maps, this became our first stop. The foundation stones were hidden in tall vegetation near the river. We could trace the entire structure. About a mile

north of the Butterfield station, we spent time at what is left of Mowry City, namely the original stage station. This station was not a Butterfield station, but used by other companies. The substantial stone building is now a ranch house. The original schoolhouse is visible, but the rest of what was a small town is now gone. Melted adobe remains and various artifacts litter the area on both sides of the river.

We spent several days looking for the trails on both sides of the Mimbres River. Previous mapping from several miles east of the area had gotten to a place where the trail forked. One fork led to the Butterfield crossing, the other to the Mowry City crossing. These two trails were located along most of their length. We also located



Brock Hileman and Richard Greene are dwarfed by the rock formations at the Giants of the Mimbres site. (Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins)



Rose Ann Tompkins, Tracy DeVault, Richard Greene and Charles Townley in the riverbed of the Mimbres River. (Photo by Greg McEachron)

some portions of trail west of the river.

One highlight of the week was a visit to the "Giants of the Mimbres." These rock formations were sketched and noted by John Russell Bartlett in 1851 when he was the commissioner of the United States-Mexican Boundary Commission. These formations are similar to those at City of Rocks State Park several miles to the west. Wandering among these giant rocks and matching views to Bartlett's sketches were worth the visit.

As usual, the group met some interesting ranchers of the area and enjoyed each other's company.

Historic Trails Get More Protection Under New BLM Plan

By Tom Rea
Wyoming Chapter President

Some of the country's best-preserved historic trails — the ones stretching from Horse Creek east of Independence Rock to South Pass — will receive more protection from industrial development under a final environmental impact statement (EIS) released in late February by the Lander Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

The EIS is the basis for the Lander office's new resource management plan (RMP), which has yet to win final approval from the agency. But the new trail protections seem pretty likely to hold up.

The 100 or so miles of the Oregon/California/Mormon Trail in the Lander district of the BLM is mostly on federal land. Since 1987, when the Lander office last revised its RMP, oil, gas and most industrial development has been prohibited on federal land inside of a half-mile wide corridor centered on the trail — one-quarter mile, that is, on each side. The BLM restrictions do not govern any private land.

Under the new plan, that corridor is much wider — for most of the way, it's five miles wide on either side of the trail. In this final EIS, the BLM has coined a new term for the wider corridor, the National Trails Management Corridor.

An equally wide corridor will protect much of the Continental

Divide Scenic Trail for much of its route through the Lander district. This trail follows the northern edge of the Red Desert northwest from Lamont and Bairoil to South Pass. The first 12 or so miles are industrialized by old oil development around Bairoil, and that stretch of the scenic trail is protected with only a half-mile-wide corridor. The rest is protected by a corridor roughly 10 miles wide.



Stone marker placed at South Pass by Ezra Meeker. (Photo by Lee Underbrink)

The result of protecting both trails in the area east of South Pass is a big overlap — a corridor often 12 or 15 miles wide over an east-west stretch of at least 35 miles.

The BLM has also greatly enlarged an old Area of Critical Environmental Concern near South Pass itself. The 1872 mining law continues to protect the right of anyone who holds a claim or a patent to mine hardrock minerals, like gold. But the expanded ACEC in the gold-bearing areas will add another layer of caution and good

sense (we hope) to that activity. Anyone who wants to mine gold within the ACEC will need to file a detailed plan for BLM review.

There are some exceptions to the protections offered by the new corridors. The trails are not protected around Jeffrey City and through Crook's Gap just to the south, where a number of pipelines and power lines already cross the trail. The BLM also chose not to extend the extra protections up into the Sweetwater Rocks just north of the trail between Devil's Gate and Split Rock, where there is already a Wilderness Study Area that imposes stricter protections.

And the BLM agreed to a recommendation from Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead's office to allow a potential pipeline crossing of the trail along a county road at Bison Basin, just southwest of where the Seminole Cutoff divides from the main branch of the trail, a few miles west of the Sweetwater Station Rest Area on U.S. 287/Wyoming Highway 789.

Any pipeline would be confined to the county road right-of-way, and only underground pipes would be allowed. The route would follow Fremont County 281, the Bison Basin Road.

Jerimiah Rieman, natural resources policy advisor in the governor's office, told me in late March that the governor's office was not asked to push for the extra pipeline crossing of the trails by any oil, gas or utility companies.

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Historic Trails: BLM Protects South Pass

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But analysts in his office believe the north-south corridor through Jeffrey City and Crook's Gap won't be wide enough in coming decades to accommodate anticipated demand for power transmission lines and pipelines.

They argued the demand for pipeline capacity requires a second crossing of the trails, partly to meet growing demand for CO₂ from the Shute Creek plant near Opal. The CO₂ will continue to be needed to squeeze oil out of old fields in the Bighorn and Powder River basins, and other places, Rieman said.

As the Lander RMP and its EIS have been moving through the long process of scoping, drafts, public comment and more drafts, it's become pretty clear that there are people within the agency, including BLM State Director Don Simpson, who are glad to see added protections for the trails, and that they hope they will provide good models for other BLM offices around the state to adopt as they revise their RMPs.

The Endangered Species Act, Wyoming geology and Wyoming wind patterns had as much to do with these new rules as did good intentions. Pressure from the Endangered Species Act caused Mead's predecessor, Gov. Dave Freudenthal, to win the cooperation of agriculture and industry in declaring sage grouse core area — large stretches of sagebrush in Wyoming — off limits to development. The system aims to protect the sage grouse from being listed as endangered, because listing would mean the automatic shutting down of a

lot of development. Most of the historic trails in the Lander district of the BLM are in sage grouse core areas.

Simple geology has meant that there are no likely oil or gas prospects the whole length of the historic trails through the Lander district.

And though the wind blows hard along the Sweetwater and up around South Pass, it doesn't blow steadily enough to entice wind-energy developers, and currently none hold leases in the Lander district. Two that did, Wasatch Wind and Pathfinder Wind, are now looking to other parts of the state to put up those big, 450-foot-tall turbines.

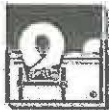
Next up in the planning cycle is the Rock Springs district of the BLM, just west and south of the Lander district. Coming up with similar protections there will be much more tricky, because the trails braid out there into many different corridors, much of the land is on the checkerboard with alternating sections of public and private ownership, and some wind and power-line developments are already underway.

But in the Lander district, fortunately, the sage-grouse, geological, and wind-speed factors have combined for what looks to be success for the BLM proposals to better protect an important stretch of trails. It's a stretch that many of us are convinced are the most pristine in the nation — and give us the best feel for what it felt like to walk them with a wagon and four-yoke ox team 160 years ago.

NEW MEMBERS

OCTA has added several new members since the last publication of NFP. We welcome these individuals and encourage all members to "invite a friend" to join.

Suzanne Hall and Bill J. Baker,
Aurora CO
Robert Bardin, Coronado CA
Joanne Broadhurst, Philip Foster
Farm, Estacada, OR
Donna Brown, Vancouver, WA
Keith Collins, Cody, WY
Jay Forte, Orangevale, CA
Robert Hamm, West Linn, OR
Duane Hornor, Albert City, IA
Cheryl Link, Boise, ID
John McVey, Boise, ID
Pamela Moore, Monmouth, IL
Nancy Morgan, Scottsdale, AZ
R Gregory Nokes, West Linn, OR
Richard Olson, Walnut Creek, CA
Elaine Rex, Mountain Home, ID
Gary Richardson, Kalispell, MT
Robert Shaughnessy, Sacramento,
CA
Julia Stuble, Lander, WY
Nancy Surdoval, Tucson, AZ
Kent Van Wyk, Rych Electric,
Littleton, CO
Michael Wallis, Tulsa, OK
Don Weinell, Gonzales, LA
Gordon James, Weed, CA



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